

MINUTES of the Special Meeting of the City
Council of the City of Rye held in City Hall on
November 8, 2000 at 8:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

STEVEN OTIS, Mayor
CAROLYN CUNNINGHAM
ROBERTA DOWNING
ROBERT H. HUTCHINGS
ROSAMOND LARR
DOUGLAS MCKEAN
ARTHUR STAMPLEMAN
Councilmen

ABSENT:

NONE

1. Roll Call

Mayor Otis called the meeting to order; a quorum was present to conduct official City business. He asked City Manager Julia Novak to present the proposed 2001 Budget.

2. Presentation by the City Manager of the proposed 2001 Budget

City Manager Novak said it was a pleasure to present the proposed budget for 2001 to the City Council. The combined budget for all nine City funds is \$26,173,804. It is divided among nine funds as follows:

General Fund

The proposed 2001 General Fund Budget is \$18,880,091. This balanced budget finances most of the City's basic services, provides modest service level enhancements, and ensures the excellent fiscal health of the community. The fund is divided up as follows:

- * 40% (\$7,458,762) funds Public Safety, including Police, Fire, Animal Control and Ambulance/EMS Services
- * 29% (\$5,533,004) supports "Community Environment" which includes Land Use Control, Maintenance of our Transportation Infrastructure, Solid Waste, Sanitary Sewers and Land Maintenance.

- * 13% (\$2,483,033 supports General Government: City Manager, Clerk, Finance, Assessor and other Administrative functions of the City;
- * 13% (2,343,067) supports Culture and Recreation which includes support for our Recreation Programs, the Rye Arts Center, Rye Historical society and the rye Free Reading Room.
- * 6% for Other Financing Uses (primarily an accounting mechanism)

The revenue comes from nine primary sources: Property Taxes (56%); Operating Budget Transfer (11%); Non-Property Tax Revenues (9%, which includes almost \$1.5M in Sales and Use Tax.); User Fees (4%); State Aid (9%); Licenses and Permits (4%); Use of Money & Property (3%); Interfund Revenues (2%); and Fines & Forfeitures (2%).

Service Level Enhancements found in the 2001 Budget include:

- * \$67,000 for the Information Systems Budget to fund technology enhancements including a conversion to Office 2000 from Office 95.
- * The addition of two new police officers which will enable a dedicated officer to be assigned to either the Village, the Central Business District or the Radar Car 7 days/week from 8AM to midnight, and one promotion to Sergeant, enabling a supervisor to supervise all tours.
- * The addition of a Senior Recreation Leader and Park Groundskeeper in the Recreation Department.
- * The addition of one additional firefighter.
- * Increased contract services include additional funding for the Rye Free Reading Room of \$741,390 and \$5000 for the Rye Youth Council for expanding the Youth Advocate Program to include a position in the Middle School.

Cable TV Fund

This fund is responsible for all City costs associated with the operation of community access cable television (RCTV) and administration of the cable television franchise. It is funded by franchise fees received from Cablevision of Westchester, other fees and donations it generates. The 2001 Budget proposes expenditures of \$163,971.

Nature Center Fund

This fund is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Rye Nature Center. 2001 expenditures are estimated to be \$361,436. General Fund support remains fixed at \$130,225.

Debt Service Fund

This fund is used to account for the payment of interest and principal on City debt (except for the Enterprise and Internal Service Funds). Expenditures of \$109,108 are required in 2001. The General Fund supports 100% of revenues.

Capital Projects Fund

This fund is the mechanism by which the City's investment in our public infrastructure is maintained. This year Capital Improvement Projects total \$1,362,000. Funding is accomplished as follows: a transfer of \$492,000 from the General Fund; a \$200,000 transfer from the Fund Balance; \$495,000 in New Debt, \$150,000 in State Aid and a \$25,000 transfer from the Fee in Lieu of Parking Fund.

Proposed projects in the fund include: \$300,000 for annual street resurfacing and repair; \$50,000 for annual sidewalk replacement; \$245,000 for parking and traffic safety; \$300,000 for drainage projects; \$225,000 for recreation projects (including new playground equipment at the lower playground at Rec Park, sprinklers at Feeley Field, lighting enhancements at Rec Park, and structural repairs to the Morehead Footbridge near Milton Road); and \$242,000 for information system initiatives.

Boat Basin Enterprise Fund

This fund, which receives no financial support from the General Fund, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the DePauw Municipal Boat Basin. Revenues are forecast to be \$405,024 while expenses are budgeted at \$449,262. This includes a 5% increase in user fees recommended by the Boat Basin Commission.

Rye Golf Club Enterprise Fund

This fund, which receive no financial support from the General Fund, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Rye Golf Club. Revenues are forecast to be \$3,590,725, while expenses are budgeted at \$3,645,273. This reflects adjustments in user fees recommended by the Rye Golf Club Commission. Membership fees are increased by 7.5% for residents and 13.5% for non-residents.

Risk Retention Internal Service Fund

This fund is used for insurance reserve funds to pay claims, judgments and losses in addition to purchasing coverage from insurance companies. The City has an excellent claims experience and total expenses are forecast at \$490,000. Revenues are 100% covered by transfers from other funds, interest income and use of retained earnings.

Building and Vehicle Maintenance Internal Service Fund

This fund supports the maintenance of the investment the City has in its buildings and fleet. Expenses for 2001 are budgeted at \$2,183,771 with revenues forecast at \$2,184,228. Building and vehicle capital projects planned for 2001 total \$742,000. These projects are supported by \$205,000 in retained earnings; a General Fund transfer of \$250,000; the issuance of \$270,000 in new debt; \$32,000 in State Aid; and a transfer from the Nature Center Fund of \$35,000.

Projects include \$50,000 for lighting and HVAC in the Council Chambers; \$40,000 for a third floor conference room; \$60,000 for City Hall Office expansion; \$70,000 for a front desk at the Police Headquarters; \$35,000 at the Rye Nature Center; and \$50,000 for improved lighting and soundproofing at the Damiano Center.

The following vehicle purchases are proposed: Police Patrol Cars (\$120,000); a Police Boat (\$64,000); a Prisoner Transport Van (\$40,000); a Fire Department SUV (\$30,000); a Public Works Pick-up Truck (\$28,000), Bucket Truck (\$95,000) and Dump Truck/Spreaders (\$110,000).

Manager Novak reported that the Operating Budget is balanced by a fund balance transfer of \$1,381,583.

The Repayment of Debt issued in 2000 for the Milton Firehouse Renovation and other Capital Improvement Projects requires a 3.08% increase in property taxes. The proposed tax rate for 2001 is \$78.80. Last year a modest increase was necessary to help fund the operating budget but from 1994-1999 the rate held steady at \$73.72. It is important for residents to remember that the City's property tax rate is just one portion of their overall tax bill. Since 1991 taxes have increased as follows: City of Rye, 8.5%; Combined Westchester County, 18.65%; Rye City Schools, 50.95%. During the same period the CPI-U increased 26.43%. The City's proportionate share of the property tax bill has declined since 1990 from 20% to 16%; Westchester County share has declined from 28% to 26%; the Rye City School share has risen from 52% to 58%. In summary, if a resident's tax bill is \$10,000, \$1,600 goes to the City. That amount will increase by 3.08% in 2001, or slightly less than \$50 which is less than 1/2 of 1% of the overall tax bill. The Manager said she feels the City provides outstanding services at what she hopes people understand is an outstanding value.

Manager Novak concluded with a discussion of the budget process. She said that City departments have been working on the budget since July of this year and that tonight the public process begins. During the next weeks the Council will have an opportunity to ask questions, make inquiries, and make changes to the budget picture. This will happen at workshops on November 15 at 7:00 PM, November 16 at 7:30 PM and, if necessary, again on November 20 at 8:00 PM. The public will be invited to give formal comment and input on November 29 at 8:00 PM.

City Manager Novak thanked all those involved in preparing the budget document and proposals. She expressed special appreciation to City Comptroller Michael Genito and his staff and to Mrs. Carol Johnson for their invaluable assistance.

Mayor Otis thanked City Manager Novak for her presentation and invited the Council to ask questions in preparation for the workshops or for answer this evening.

Councilman Stampleman: Is there provision for a driver for the new Senior Citizen van and how frequently will the van be used? Is there provision for cleaning Purchase Street continuously during the summer? *No, there is no request for a van driver, but it can be driven by any Recreation Department staff member. Yes, cleaning will be continuous during the summer.* What percentage of the proposed expenditures do we expect to spend this year? *About 96%.* How much will the council be able to authorize as debt service this year? *\$595,583 is available subject to City Council Vote; \$971,167 is available subject to Permissive Referendum.* He feels it is important to compare the budget with forecast amounts for the prior year (i.e. 2000) rather than just prior year budget amounts. He indicated additional questions had been submitted in writing to the City Manager, for which answers are promised.

Councilwoman Cunningham: What are the ordinances for trash pick-up by businesses on Purchase Street? *Businesses are responsible for the front; the City picks up in the rear.* Are the additions to the Police staff in addition to the four added last year? *The Assistant position included last year was never filled because the needs changed. Councilwoman Larr mentioned that the increases from last year were to fill positions available due to attrition, and an anticipated retirement so the net increase last year was one.* What is the background on use of the fire boat?

Councilman McKean: Is there provision in the Rye Town Park Commission budget to set aside funds which will be needed to match the duck pond grant? Why is there such an increase in the Community Environment Land Maintenance Community Beautification expense (page 12-74) and Culture and Recreation (Tennis) lines (page 12-83)? Are there funds for the Boston Post Road retaining wall? *No.*

Councilman Hutchings: Does the budget provide for accrual for land acquisition? *The City is likely to issue bonds or take money out of the reserve fund.*

Councilwoman Downing: How is the new Boat Basin boat being paid for? *Half with a State grant.*

3. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Councilwoman Larr made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Downing and unanimously carried, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan A. Morison
City Clerk

